

What is claimed is:

1. A load-lock device for introducing substrates into a vacuum chamber, comprising:

5 a load-lock chamber having at least one opening on the input side for introducing the substrates from an atmosphere area located in front of the input-side opening into an interior space located inside a load-lock chamber, and at least one opening on the output side for connecting the interior space of the load-lock chamber to the interior space of a vacuum chamber with the intermediary of a valve;

10 at least one vacuum door which is associated with a respective opening on the input side and which comprises a closure element which communicates with a drive device via at least one carrier rod and is adjustable by the drive device between a position in which the input-side opening is open and a position in which the input-side opening is closed;

15 said closure element contacting a contact surface of the load-lock chamber;

wherein, considered from the atmosphere area located in front of the input-side opening, the drive device is arranged behind a plane which extends through the contact surface of the load-lock chamber and lies vertical to the axis of the input-side opening.

2. The load-lock device according to claim 1, wherein the drive device is at least partially concealed by at least one cover plate viewed from the atmosphere area located in front of the input-side opening.

25 3. The load-lock device according to claim 1, wherein the drive device has at least one pneumatic piston-cylinder unit.

30 4. The load-lock device according to claim 1, wherein the at least one carrier rod extends in the direction of the vacuum chamber at least in some areas considered from the closure element to the drive unit.

5. The load-lock device according to claim 1, wherein two carrier rods are arranged at the closure element in the area of side edges of the same.

5 6. The load-lock device according to claim 2, wherein a hole through which a portion of the carrier rod extending in the direction of the vacuum chamber projects is arranged in the at least one cover plate.

10 7. The load-lock device according to claim 2, wherein the front side of the at least one cover plate facing the atmosphere area located in front of the input-side opening and the contact surface of the load-lock chamber lie at least substantially in a common plane.

15 8. The load-lock device according to claim 2, wherein the at least one cover plate and the load-lock chamber are formed in one piece.

20 9. The load-lock device according to claim 8, wherein the drive device is arranged at least partially in at least one recess which is arranged in the load-lock chamber, adjoins the cover plate in the direction of the vacuum chamber and is open at least toward the bottom or the top of the load-lock chamber.

25 10. The load-lock device according to claim 1, wherein the drive device has at least one drive unit which comprises first and second piston-cylinder units, wherein the piston rod of the first piston-cylinder unit is connected to the carrier rod or one of the carrier rods, and the closure element is adjustable by means of the first piston-cylinder unit between a position in which the input-side opening is open and a position in which the closure element is located opposite the input-side opening but is lifted from the load-lock chamber, and the closure element is adjustable by means of the at least one second piston-cylinder unit between the position in which the closure element is located opposite the input-side opening but

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is lifted from the load-lock chamber and a completely closed position in which the closure element contacts the load-lock chamber.

11. The load-lock device according to claim 10, wherein two such drive devices are provided.

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12. The load-lock device according to claim 1, wherein an air flow extending vertical to the axis of the input-side opening is guided in the atmosphere area located in front of the input-side opening.